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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MANAGUA 001159

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR WHA/CEN
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/07/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KV](#) [EU](#) [NU](#)

SUBJECT: NICARAGUA-KOSOVO: NO PLAN TO RECOGNIZE, BUT
PREVENTED CENTAM CONSENSUS

REF: A. MANAGUA 1153
[1](#)B. MANAGUA 1138
[1](#)C. MANAGUA 1116 AND PREVIOUS
[1](#)D. GUATEMALA 607
[1](#)E. SAN SALVADOR 535
[1](#)F. PANAMA 328
[1](#)G. STATE 41979
[1](#)H. SAN SALVADOR 231
[1](#)I. SAN SALVADOR 195
[1](#)J. MANAGUA 32
[1](#)K. STATE 1087

Classified By: Ambassador Robert Callahan for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY. On September 8, Foreign Ministry officials confirmed that Nicaragua has not recognized Kosovo and has no plans to do so in the future. This formal confirmation of the GON position on Kosovo comes eight months after our first inquiries (REF I) and stands in stark contrast to Nicaragua's lightning-quick recognition of the breakaway Georgian "republics" of South Ossetia and Abkhazia (REF B). In a separate conversation with the Ambassador on the same day (REF A), Foreign Minister Samuel Santos drew a distinction between Nicaragua's opposing stances on Kosovo and the Georgian "republics" -- a position that differs greatly from the one he asserted to the Deputy Secretary in February. Nicaragua's formal, though not-public, statement on Kosovo may reduce the chance that other Central American nations will formally recognize Kosovo. As early as February, Managua had actively worked to block a long-promised consensus decision by Central American countries to recognize Kosovo. END SUMMARY.

Ossetia "Si," Kosovo "No"

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[1](#)2. (C) On September 8, we met with Rene Morales, Americas Division Director, to discuss positions on upcoming UNGA agenda items. In response to our question from a previous meeting regarding Serbia's plan to request that the ICJ rule on Kosovo's status (REF C), Morales confirmed to us that the Government of Nicaragua (GON) had not recognized Kosovo and did not have any plans to do so. This statement of GON policy came more than six months after we first inquired

about this theme (REF J) and on the heels of Nicaragua's highly-publicized formal recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia (REF B). On the same day, but in a separate conversation with the Ambassador, Foreign Minister Samuel Santos confirmed Nicaragua's non-recognition of Kosovo and drew a distinction between Kosovo and Nicaragua's lightning-quick decision to recognize the breakaway Georgian "republics" of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Santos asserted that Kosovo did not fall under United Nations norms, that Kosovo was an "unnatural division" of Yugoslavia that had damaged its territorial integrity, and so "different criteria" had been applied to the GON's non-recognition Kosovo.

GON blocked Centam Consensus on Kosovo

13. (C) During a Valentine's Day meeting, Foreign Minister Samuel Santos assured the Deputy Secretary that Nicaragua was "studying the issue" of recognition for Kosovo. By mid-February, it seemed that most Central American countries were poised to recognize Kosovo. In fact, regional reporting indicated that a formal recognition statement had been in the works, perhaps in conjunction with a Heads-of-State meeting of the Central American Security Initiative (SICA), hosted by El Salvador (REFS H, I). However, the statement never materialized. Our contacts later told us that during the SICA meeting, almost at the moment Santos was meeting with the Deputy Secretary, the GON had actively blocked consensus in favor of Kosovo recognition. By May, Guatemala, El Salvador and Panama had all backed away from recognition.

(REFS D, E, F)

COMMENT

14. (C) The principal basis for this decision may have been the question: "Will it oppose the U.S. position?" We also suspect that, as in the recognition of Ossetia and Abkhazia, Ortega may hope that aligning Nicaragua with Russia may somehow herald a return to the privileged position and accompanying largesse which it received in the 1980s from the Soviet Union.

CALLAHAN